

**MICHIGAN VEHICLE CODE (EXCERPT)**  
**Act 300 of 1949**

**OFFENSES AGAINST REGISTRATION LAWS AND CANCELLATION OF REGISTRATION**

**257.255 Valid registration plate required; exceptions; violation of subsection (1) as civil infraction or misdemeanor; penalty; nonpayment of apportioned fee under international registration plan as misdemeanor; penalty; impoundment; towing and storage costs; care of load in vehicle; impounded vehicle subject to lien; hearing; certification of unpaid judgment; foreclosure sale.**

Sec. 255. (1) Except as otherwise provided in this chapter, a person shall not operate, nor shall an owner knowingly permit to be operated, upon any highway, a vehicle required to be registered under this act unless there is attached to and displayed on the vehicle, as required by this chapter, a valid registration plate issued for the vehicle by the department for the current registration year. A registration plate shall not be required upon any wrecked or disabled vehicle, or vehicle destined for repair or junking, which is being transported or drawn upon a highway by a wrecker or a registered motor vehicle.

(2) Except as otherwise provided in this section, a person who violates subsection (1) is responsible for a civil infraction. However, if the vehicle is a commercial vehicle which is required to be registered according to the schedule of elected gross vehicle weights under section 801(1)(k), the person is guilty of a misdemeanor punishable by imprisonment for not more than 90 days or a fine of not more than \$500.00, or both.

(3) A person who operates a vehicle licensed under the international registration plan and does not have a valid registration due to nonpayment of the apportioned fee is guilty of a misdemeanor, punishable by imprisonment for not more than 90 days, or by a fine of not more than \$100.00, or both. In addition, a police officer may impound the vehicle until a valid registration is obtained. If the vehicle is impounded, the towing and storage costs of the vehicle, and the care or preservation of the load in the vehicle shall be the owner's responsibility. Vehicles impounded shall be subject to a lien in the amount of the apportioned fee and any fine and costs incurred under this subsection, subject to a valid lien of prior record. If the apportioned fee, fine, and costs are not paid within 90 days after impoundment, then following a hearing before the judge or magistrate who imposed the fine and costs, the judge or magistrate shall certify the unpaid judgment to the prosecuting attorney of the county in which the violation occurred. The prosecuting attorney shall enforce the lien by foreclosure sale in accordance with the procedure authorized by law for chattel mortgage foreclosures.

**History:** 1949, Act 300, Eff. Sept. 23, 1949;—Am. 1961, Act 26, Imd. Eff. May 11, 1961;—Am. 1962, Act 58, Eff. Mar. 28, 1963;—Am. 1963, Act 88, Eff. Sept. 6, 1963;—Am. 1984, Act 330, Imd. Eff. Dec. 26, 1984;—Am. 1987, Act 34, Eff. Aug. 26, 1987;—Am. 2003, Act 9, Eff. Sept. 1, 2003.

**257.256 Unlawful lending or use of certificate of title, registration certificate, registration plate, special plate, or permit; unlawful carrying or display of registration certificate or plate; violation as misdemeanor; penalty; unlawful display of registration plate on commercial vehicle.**

Sec. 256. (1) A person shall not lend to another person, or knowingly permit the use of, any certificate of title, registration certificate, registration plate, special plate, or permit issued to him or her if the person receiving or using the certificate of title, registration certificate, registration plate, special plate, or permit would not be entitled to the use thereof. A person shall not carry or display upon a vehicle any registration certificate or registration plate not issued for the vehicle or not otherwise lawfully used under this act.

(2) Except as otherwise provided in this section, a person who violates this section is guilty of a misdemeanor, punishable by imprisonment for not more than 90 days, or by a fine of not more than \$100.00, or both.

(3) A person who displays upon a commercial vehicle which is required to be registered according to the schedule of elected gross vehicle weights under section 801(1)(k) any registration plate not issued for the vehicle or not otherwise lawfully used under this act is guilty of a misdemeanor, punishable by imprisonment for not more than 90 days, or by a fine of not more than \$500.00, or both.

**History:** 1949, Act 300, Eff. Sept. 23, 1949;—Am. 1987, Act 34, Eff. Aug. 26, 1987.

**257.257 Altering, forging, or falsifying documents; penalty.**

Sec. 257. (1) A person who commits any of the following acts is guilty of a felony:

(a) Alters with fraudulent intent any certificate of title, registration certificate, or registration plate issued by the department.

- (b) Forges or counterfeits any such document or plate purporting to have been issued by the department.
- (c) Alters or falsifies with fraudulent intent or forges any assignment upon a certificate of title.
- (d) Holds or uses such a document or plate knowing the same to have been altered, forged, or falsified.
- (e) Knowingly possesses, sells, or offers for sale a stolen, false, or counterfeit certificate of title, registration certificate, registration plate, registration decal, or registration tab.

(2) A person who is convicted of a second violation of this section shall be punished by imprisonment for not less than 2 years or more than 7 years, or by a fine of not less than \$1,500.00 or more than \$7,000.00, or both.

(3) A person who is convicted of a third or subsequent violation of this section shall be punished by imprisonment for not less than 5 years or more than 15 years, or by a fine of not less than \$5,000.00 or more than \$15,000.00, or both.

**History:** 1949, Act 300, Eff. Sept. 23, 1949;—Am. 1992, Act 309, Eff. Mar. 31, 1993.

## **257.258 Registration or certificate of title; grounds for cancellation; elected gross weight violations; penalty; notice; hearing.**

Sec. 258. (1) The secretary of state may cancel, revoke, or suspend the registration of a vehicle, a certificate of title, registration certificate, or registration plate if any of the following apply:

(a) The secretary of state determines that the registration, certificate of title, or plate was fraudulently or erroneously issued.

(b) The secretary of state determines that the licensee has made or is making an unlawful use of his or her registration certificate, plate, or certificate of title.

(c) A registered vehicle has been dismantled or wrecked.

(d) The secretary of state determines that the required fee has not been paid and it is not paid upon reasonable notice or demand.

(e) A registration certificate or registration plate is knowingly displayed upon a vehicle other than the one for which it was issued.

(f) The secretary of state determines that the owner has committed an offense under this act involving the registration or certificate of title.

(g) The secretary of state is authorized to do so under this act.

(h) Upon receiving notification from another state or foreign country that a certificate of title issued by the secretary of state has been surrendered by the owner in conformity with the laws of that state or foreign country.

(i) It is shown by satisfactory evidence that delivery of a motor vehicle in the possession of a dealer was not made to the applicant registered under this act. The money paid for registration and license fees may be refunded to the party who applies for the refund.

(2) If the licensee's offense consists of hauling on the registered vehicle a gross weight more than 1,000 pounds in excess of the elected gross weight specified on the owners' registration certificate, the registration shall be canceled and the vehicle shall not again be operated on the highways, roads, or streets until it is registered again and new plates are issued. The new registration fee shall be computed on the basis of twice the difference between the original registration fee and the registration fee applicable to the gross weight constituting the violation of the elected gross weight. One-half of the new registration fee shall be a penalty. The period of the new registration fee shall not extend beyond the termination date of the canceled registration certificate. The new registration fee shall not exceed the maximum gross weight of the vehicle or combination of vehicles as determined by the number of axles and the legal weight applicable to those axles as specified by section 722. The gross weight of a vehicle or combination of vehicles may be determined by weighing the individual axles or group of axles, and the total weight on all axles is the gross vehicle weight.

(3) Before the secretary of state makes a cancellation under subsection (1)(a), (b), (e), (f), or (g), the person affected by the cancellation shall be given notice and an opportunity to be heard.

**History:** 1949, Act 300, Eff. Sept. 23, 1949;—Am. 1951, Act 270, Eff. Sept. 28, 1951;—Am. 1959, Act 250, Imd. Eff. Aug. 21, 1959;—Am. 1968, Act 214, Eff. Nov. 15, 1968;—Am. 1969, Act 309, Imd. Eff. Aug. 14, 1969;—Am. 1998, Act 347, Eff. Oct. 1, 1999;—Am. 1999, Act 73, Eff. Oct. 1, 1999.

## **257.259 Evidence of registration; title; dealer or wreckers' licenses; return to state on cancellation; failure or refusal to surrender unlawful.**

Sec. 259. (a) All license plates, certificates of title, registration certificates or the license of any dealer or wrecker, shall be deemed to be the property of the state of Michigan and whenever the department as authorized hereunder cancels or suspends the registration of a vehicle or a certificate of title, or the license of any dealer or wrecker, the owner or person in possession of the same shall immediately return the evidence of

registration, title, or license so cancelled or suspended to the department.

(b) It is unlawful for any person to fail or refuse to surrender to the department upon demand any registration, certificate of title or license of any dealer as required in this section.

**History:** 1949, Act 300, Eff. Sept. 23, 1949;—Am. 1951, Act 270, Eff. Sept. 28, 1951.